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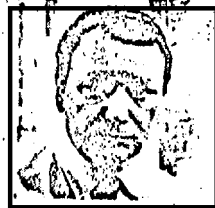
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The New China Experts

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c New York Times

By JAMES RESTON

WASHINGTON — The administration is busy reassuring everybody these days that China is not likely to enter the Vietnamese war, but how do they know? And who are the experts who sit in on the great decisions and calculate China's reaction?

When the Soviet Union was the main concern here, it was easy to spot the Soviet scholars close to the President. Ten years before the United States recognized the Soviet Union — in Harding's administration, of all times — the State Department trained a class of Kremlinologists, and from the Roosevelt administration to the Johnson administration, either Charles E. Bohlen, George F. Kennan or Llewellyn Thompson was called on for advice.

No such experienced and distinguished diplomats are summoned to the White House now on China questions. Most of the "Old China Hands" of the Bohlen-Thompson generation — John Paton Davies, John Carter Vincent, Edmund Clubb, etc. — were shunted aside in the McCarthy raids on the State Department, and the New China Hands are not invited to the critical White House policy sessions.

Secretary of State Rusk is the sole Far Eastern expert in President Johnson's foreign policy inner circle. He served as dep-

uty chief of staff to Gen. Joseph Stilwell in the China-Burma-India theater during World War II, and was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs from 1950 to 1952, but he never served in China and is not a student of that country as Bohlen and Thompson were students of the Soviet Union.

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THERE IS IN this government, however, a new generation of China experts, skilled in the languages of China, who follow political, economic and military developments in that country as best they can.

Edward Earl Ric, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, heads a large mission in Hong Kong that monitors and analyzes all wireless and printed information available at that listening post. He is assisted by two other competent foreign service officers, Oscar Vance Armstrong, who speaks Mandarin, and John H. Holdridge, who is the principal political officer of the Hong Kong mission.

In the White House office of McGeorge Bundy, special assistant to the President for national security affairs, there are two China experts, James Thompson, who is off in Asia now with Vice President Humphrey, and Chester L. Cooper, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate and former Central Intelligence officer, who helps Bundy with Viet Nam. And of course, the CIA has its own China experts, but their work is not widely advertised.

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